

General Competition Guidelines.

Pet Dog Rally Obedience is intended to encourage pet dog owners into the world of dog sports. Its aim is to promote positive relationships between dogs and their owners based on mutual trust, respect and communication. PDRO offers a framework of rules, judging and scoring guidelines that can be used flexibly, to meet the needs of the Competition Organizer and the Competitor alike. It actively encourages positive reinforcement through praise and reward during competitions and training at **all** levels. The use of physical or harsh verbal corrections is prohibited and points are lost for inappropriate handling.

PDRO recognizes that successful competing and training go hand in hand and therefore aims for a positive training experience, even when a competitor does not achieve a qualifying score. To this end, PDRO scoring apportions a points deduction, in preference to being excluded from scoring.

Judges. The position of judge carries with it a great responsibility. The judge represents the standards and values set out by the Pet Dog Rally Obedience committee. These core standards and values must be represented by Pet Dog Rally Obedience judges at all times.

Judging. Judges should be fluent with the exercise requirements. They should be impartial, fair and encouraging to all competitors. The judge's decision is final.

Judges are responsible for providing a flowing course appropriate to the level of class being judged. This can be designed by the judge or taken from a published source.

Judges are responsible for completing and checking the total score. A scoring steward may assist. At the end of a class the total scores should be entered to a score record sheet if required by the competition organizers, the competitor score sheet is given to the competitor. Judges should ensure their scoring is clear and informative to the competitor.

Collars.

Correction collars are not permitted - choke chains, slip collars, prong collars are not allowed nor are no-pull harnesses with straps under the forelegs. Collars should be fitted with a legally required dog tag. Head Collars and half check collars are permitted, but harsh/abrupt use will incur deductions.

Costumes and Coats.

These are allowable but should not impede the judge's view.

If your dog requires his own personal space, the wearing of a green/yellow bandana or lead will indicate this to other dog owners, who will then respect your dog and keep a wider berth. This does not excuse aggressive behaviour which will result in removal from the ring/grounds.

Threatening / aggressive behaviour by a dog or handler will result in removal from the ring and/or the grounds, as determined by the Judge or Trial officials.

Handlers who deliver a **harsh physical/verbal correction** will be excused from the ring/grounds as determined by the Judge in the ring/ or Trial officials in the grounds

Eligibility

All breeds of dogs and mixed breed dogs are eligible to compete under PDRO rules. Dogs must be over the age of 6 months to compete at Pink and Bronze Level and 12 months of age to compete at Silver, Gold and Gold Star Levels.

They must be healthy and free from pain, bandages, stitches or tape.

Female dogs in season may not compete.

Dogs that become ill or lame in the ring will be excused.

Disabled dogs and Handlers.

The judge can accommodate and modify scoring for dogs and/or handlers with disabilities/impairments. The competitor will notify the judge prior to the competition of any disabilities for consideration. The judge's discretion and decision is final.

Ring Size.

For outside competitions the optimum size will be 21 x 15 metres. The ring construction should take into account safety for the dog and the chance to compete with minimum distraction from the ring exterior. Organizers may hold competitions in a reduced size ring indoors with a minimum of ten exercises plus a bonus if this can be safely accommodated. Ring size variations should be noted on schedules.

Course time. Pet Dog Rally Obedience is not a timed event.

Walkthrough.

A minimum of ten minutes is provided prior to the start of each class to walk the course and ask the judge any questions. A later walkthrough may be allowed at the Judge's discretion.

Awards. Qualifying Score.

The awards are there to encourage and reward the team's effort.

The competition host is responsible for providing rosettes, prizes or certificates to competitors.

A qualifying score at all levels is 170 and over. It is recommended that each competitor achieving this score should receive an award. This could be a rosette or certificate.

Organizers may also choose to award over 170, 180, 190 and 200 scored with a different colour rosette/certificate. Places may also be rewarded at the discretion of the competition organizer.

Organizations holding registered competitions have specific rules and scoring and competitors should always ensure they are aware of these, dependent on the competition they have entered.

Qualifying scores earned under PDRO scoring system do not count towards any other organizations awards, titles or rankings.

Performance Guidelines.

Praise, Encouragement and Feedback are allowed throughout the competition. Handlers may clap their hands or slap their legs as well as use words and sounds to **encourage** their dog while heeling between exercises or during moving exercises (turns, spirals, etc.) **while** the dog is in the heel position.

Handlers are allowed to give verbal **encouragement** after the first command.

Deductions are made if repeated cues are used to bring the dog back to heel position or effect a turn.

Deductions are made if repeated verbal or physical cues are given to effect a change in the dog's position at a stationary exercise.

Rewards and Praise

Food , Play and Touch rewards are allowed at **all** levels when the team has **completed all elements of a stationary exercise** and before the team has begun to heel forward towards the next exercise. **In Pink Level a reward may be given when each stationary element of an exercise is completed.** Treat delivery should not impede the flow of the team's progress.

Dropped treats will be marked as a deduction to the flow.

Food and Toys must be carried out of sight and inaudible to the dog.

Food bags/Bum Bags are not allowed in the ring.

A team **holding/using a treat in the hand or luring** with a treat will be marked as a training round.

A treat may be given as the team pass the finish sign.

Where toys are used, they must not contain a squeak or emit a noise. When using play as a reward, the handler should not make excessive actions or noise that may be detrimental to other competitors and dogs in the confined space in a hall.

Heel position

The dog is considered to be in the heel or side position when level with and at the side of the handler . Out of position will be scored if the dog is not facing the same direction, forges ahead so that the dog's head and shoulders are ahead of the handler's side, lags behind the handler's side, is wide or dog is sniffing the ground. The dog's head should remain in an 'arms length' arc at the side of the handler. The pace should remain constant unless prompted to change by the exercise sign.

Targeting the hand.

Where the hand is placed for the dog to follow/or to position the dog no deductions are made if the dog is in position but if used to correct position or behaviour, deductions will be made for additional cues.

Luring

Luring with the appearance of having a reward in the hand or using the hand as if it may hold a treat e.g. pinched fingers and/or using a hand directly/constantly in front of the dogs face to position the dog or cue an exercise will incur a one point deduction, each occurrence.

Clickers. These are an excellent training tool but not permitted to be used in the competition.

Cues/Commands

Each element of a stationary exercise can be cued with a verbal and physical cue given simultaneously. Heel is commanded on move off. (see Heel position)

Retries

A team may choose to retry an exercise at a cost of 3 points.

Points previously lost are eradicated. (exception is the recall exercise).

Only one retry is allowable at each exercise. Retries are not allowed if the team has moved on from the exercise or if the team has scored an NQ score.

Failure of the first element of the **Recall** exercises incurs a deduction of **5 points**.

The retry "of the first element" is allowable at an **additional 3 point deduction**, to enable the team to complete the second part of the recall.

Retries are not allowable on the bonus exercise.

Training Round.

The **handler** may request at any time in the competition to continue as a training round. The judge will score Training Round and offer appropriate and encouraging advice to the handler to complete the round. Rewards may be freely used in a training round.

Using treats to lure the dog will result in the round being scored as a training round.

Sign Placement.

Signs must be placed so that they are on the handler's right with the following exceptions:

Turns and Pivots may be placed directly in the handler's path.

Weave, Return Weave, Figure 8, Spiral left and Send over Jump signs are placed on the teams left.

Moving Side Steps Right -exercises are performed behind the exercise sign.

The dog or handler should start/perform the exercise within two feet of the exercise sign. If the exercise is a circle/270/or turn, one team member should be within 2 feet of the sign. If the team perform the exercise too far from the sign, the judge will score, sign out of distance. If the team does not change pace within 2 feet of the exercise sign, the judge will score Failure to Change/Maintain pace.

Touching the Dog to Prompt an exercise.

The handler may not, **at any time on course**, use physical **touching** or **force** to elicit compliance, attention or a position.

This should not be confused with a touch reward given when all elements of a stationary exercise are complete.

Start, Finish, Bonus.

At all levels dogs must enter and leave the ring on lead.

A few moments may be taken to warm up your dog in the ring before starting the round. Handlers must avoid all obstacle exercises, jumps, tunnels, food bowls.

Removing the lead signifies the team are ready to start. The dog may be marked for Loss of control, if they do not remain with the handler.

The handler must notify the judge if they are not performing the bonus exercise before starting the course. Find Yours equipment will be removed in this instance. No points are deducted if for safety reasons in Bronze Level the team, do not attempt the bonus. Judging starts as the team passes the start sign or removes the lead. There is no requirement to start in the course with the dog in sit, the team may commence by passing 'Start' in normal pace. In Silver, Gold and Gold Star levels, the lead should be removed as the team are ready to start. The lead must be removed without physically restraining the dog. The dog can be cued sit or wait to remove the lead.

The team may stop after the finish sign and a reward be given.

In Pink level all bonus exercises are performed on lead. The "BONUS" sign is not used.

In Bronze level Bonus Exercises 1 and 4 are performed on lead.

For other Bonus Exercises the lead should be removed at the "BONUS" sign before moving to the first bonus exercise and leaving the dog. The handler may give an additional cue to remove the lead, but may not restrain the dog at the collar or by holding the dog. (Touching dog to prompt heel, will be scored).

In Silver, Gold and Gold Star Levels the dog is off lead. The "BONUS" sign is not used. The team pass the finish sign and proceed to the first part/bonus exercise.

Jump heights may be modified or the jump exercise excused entirely based on physical challenges that a dog may face. It is the handlers responsibility to advise the judge prior to commencement of their round.

All jumps must be a single bar jump constructed in a manner that provides stability and safety for all dogs. Jump width is to be between 4 feet and 5 feet.

Tunnel.

The tunnel should be approx. 1.2 meters length and have a minimum diameter of 0.6 m.

Pet Dog Rally Obedience

Pink Level : First entry level, performed on lead

Puppy Pink Championship : Puppies over 6months and under one year at start of current year.

Bronze Level: Novice Level, performed on lead.

Bronze No Sits courses may be included at some trials. Teams **may** enter the Bronze and Bronze No Sits classes at one trial.

Advancing on Lead: Performed on lead, exception may be the bonus. Some exercises are taken from Silver level, where these can be performed on lead.

Silver Level : Intermediate Level, performed off lead.

As above for No Sits.

Gold Level : Advanced Level, performed off lead.

As above for No Sits.

Bronze on the Side: Bronze level course where a change of heel position is made.

Silver on Side: Silver level course where changes of heel position are made.

Gold Star Level : Versatility level performed off lead. Dog will be required to work on both sides of the handler. Dogs over 12 months of age.